**Connect**

How have you seen God answer prayer? How?

**Cultivate**

**Summary:** Prayer is an ongoing dialogue with God and a natural response to His work in our lives. The ACTS model of prayer is an easy and effective guide to an individual or corporate time in prayer. ACTS stands for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication.

**Read** Matthew 6:9-13 (this is Jesus speaking)

*“This, then, is how you should pray:
“‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”*

**Practice:** As a group, read and discuss each of the four sections that follow, and pause to pray after each section.

**Adoration**

Adoration is another word for worship or praise. In adoration we communicate to God how great He is. It’s about recognizing God’s character.

* How merciful God is.
* How Loving God is.
* How God knows everything.
* How faithful God is.
* How God can’t ever change.

**Discuss:** Which of God’s character qualities are brought out in Jesus’ prayer?

**Pray:** Take some time to praise God for these character qualities as a group.

**Confession**

Confession means to agree with. It is agreeing with God that you have sinned and agreeing with God that He has forgiven your sin. Confession is about honesty, humility and faith.

* Confess sin that we willfully chose to do.
* Confess sin where we knew what was right, but chose not to do it.
* Confess the things we desire more than God.
* Confess wrong motives and thoughts we are aware of.

**Discuss:** Where do you see confession in Jesus’ prayer?

**Pray:** Take some time now to privately confess your sins to God.

**Thanksgiving**

**Read** 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

*“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”*

As adoration is worshiping God for who He is, thanksgiving is thanking God for what He has done, is doing and will do.

* We can thank God for the good things in our lives.
* We can thank God for the difficult things as well.
* We can thank God for answered prayer.
* We can thank God for the things we don’t understand.
* We can thank God for being good to fulfill His many wonderful promises.
* We can thank God for the little things and for the big things.

**Discuss:** Where do you see thanksgiving in 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8?

**Pray:** Take some time to thank God for His good work in the world and in our lives.

**Supplication**

**Read** 1 John 5:14-15

*“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.”*

‘Supplication’ means to earnestly and humbly ask for something. The Bible tells us to pray for a wide range of things. The following are just a few ideas.

* Pray for your motivations and desires to be aligned with God’s.
* Pray for endurance and perseverance in the midst of difficulties.
* Pray that those who don’t know God would have eyes to see who God really is.
* Pray for those we are seeking to help grow spiritually.
* Pray for protection against the spiritual forces of evil.
* Pray for specific things which are troubling you or are tempting you to worry.
* Pray for wisdom.

**Discuss:** What types of things do you usually pray for? What kind of changes do you think needs to be made about the things you are praying for?

**Pray:** Take some time to make your requests known to God.

**Discuss:**

1. Which of the four section are the easiest and most difficult for you to pray? Why do you think that is?
2. How can we spend more time talking to God, both individually and together?

**Pray:** In light of what we’ve discussed, how can we pray for each other right now?

**Application**

This is a great pattern to begin to learn and discipline yourself to pray. A way to continue this habit is by making a prayer list. A list has many benefits such as keeping track of who/what you are praying for, being able to stay more focused in your time of prayer, and keeping track of how God will answer these prayers.

A word of caution: While a prayer list can help it can also become something that is simply a routine. Be careful not to let a list that you develop become something that you just are reading off daily. God does not want us to simply read from a list but to interact and communicate with him through prayer. Be sure to come to the list with fresh vision and energy. This may mean that you only need to use the list 3 times per week and let the other times you pray follow the ACTS model and times of free prayer.

Start to develop a list from these categories: Thanksgiving and answered prayers, Family, Friends, Ministers/Pastors, Lost people you know, personal growth and your own needs, special requests.

Tip: This list can become quite long and if you really prayed for each request on the list properly it may take hours. A good practice is to take a few people/things from each section (2-4) and pray for those. The next day or time you use the list choose a different set of things within that section to pray for.

Use the space below to start making a prayer list!